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Orange Seed.

THE ORANGE SEED.

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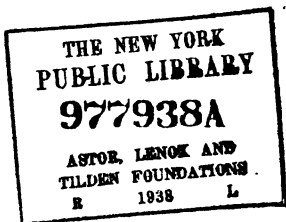
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THE ORANGE SEED.

I.

The Seed Planted.

THE nursery at Mrs. Bailey's was a large, cheerful room, the pleasantest room in the house, everybody said. There the sun shone in, from the time it waked little Helen, and bade her a cheerful good-morning, until it slowly sank in the west, and whispered, as it went down, that the flowers had better be closed for the night, and the children tucked up in their beds, before the twilight was over.

In this pleasant nursery sat Helen Bailey, one bright morning in May. Her own little table was before her, but on it lay none of her favorite books, nor was it covered with

the contents of her small work-box, to prove that she was busy at her sewing. No, Miss Helen was engaged in a manner more satisfactory to her than turning over page after page, or keeping her needle busy.

Helen had a brown towel pinned round her neck, and before her was a plate on which she had just placed one of the largest oranges that ever a little girl bought for four whole cents.

Helen felt that she had a particular right to that orange, for she had not only gone to the shop for it herself, but she had paid for it with her own money, all the money she had in the world.

Mrs. Bailey had hoped to hear Helen say: "One penny I will put by for the missionary box, and one for the poor;" but, as no such thoughts as these seemed to come into the little girl's mind, the mother let her have her own way. Mrs. Bailey ever remembered that "God loveth a cheerful giver," and whatever Helen gave away, she wished offered of her own free will.

Helen had a bright, happy face, and now it beamed above the folds of the brown towel the very picture of quiet satisfaction.



"This is a very difficult business, but I think I am doing it nicely, Mamma," said Helen, as she carefully took off the peel of the orange, and divided it into four quarters. "See, I have not spilled a drop of the juice yet."

There was something in Helen's manner, as she spoke, that showed that she had a very good opinion of herself, and did not mind having a little praise from others, to confirm her in it.

Mrs. Bailey smiled pleasantly, but was silent.

"Now, there is one for you, Mamma, one for Papa, one for Biddy, and one for me," said Helen; and, as she spoke, Helen laid a quarter of the orange on each of the small china plates she had taken from her beloved tea-set, for the occasion.

Mrs. Bailey thanked Helen, and ate her piece of orange, declaring that it had an uncommonly pleasant flavor. Mrs. Bailey always took what Helen gave her, for she wanted her to be above the meanness of offering what she did not wish to have accepted.

Helen hastened to the kitchen to give Biddy, the cook, a share of the treat.

"Sure, and you are the sweetest, most free-handed little lady in the world," said Biddy, as she put the nice morsel in her mouth; and Helen skipped away, believing in her heart that what Biddy had said was perfectly true.

Helen was generous; she liked to share whatever she had with others, and so increase her own pleasure.

When Helen again sat down at the table, it was plain that she could enjoy a good thing with real zest. There was a look on her round face, as she swallowed the refreshing juice, that proved that it was not likely that her little figure had grown so plump, without a hearty satisfaction in the food on which she had fed.

"Now, Mamma, I am going to plant one of these seeds, and by and by I shall have an orange tree of my own," said Helen, when she had done eating, and away she ran to the garden to carry out her plan:

There was a pleasant corner of the garden which Helen was allowed to consider her own, and there she spent much of her time, when the weather would permit. Helen called this spot her garden, though little grew there, for she was more fond of digging holes

in the ground, or making heaps of earth, than of weeding or watering her plants. Now, however, there was quite a business-like air about her, and she looked twice at the little stick she had selected, before she was convinced that it would make a suitable place for the seed she intended to plant. The small, dark home was soon made ready, and then down into it she thrust the seed, and covered it over with her fingers, setting up over it the stick she had used, with a bit of orange peel fastened on to it with a pin, to mark the spot. .

Day after day Helen looked for the orange seed to send up little green leaves above the ground, to prove that it was still alive. She could not see it, but she knew it was there, and her mother had told her that folded away in it was a living plant, and patiently and hopefully she watched to see that plant appear.

Mrs. Bailey too was watching and waiting. She too had planted something, which she longed to see living and growing. Ever since little Helen's infancy, her mother had been teaching her about the gentle, holy Saviour, and trying to lead her little one to love

Him, and strive to follow His example. Mrs. Bailey knew that she had planted "good seed," but as yet no signs that it was really alive had been shown by her little daughter. Helen was affectionate and generous, but it was plain, even to her mother's partial eye, that she loved her own way better than she loved to do right. Helen was eight years old, yet Mrs. Bailey was not yet sure that her careful teaching had led her little one to be one of the lambs of Jesus' flock.

II.

The Puzzling Letter.



RS. BAILEY had received a letter one morning, and its contents seemed to make her very thoughtful. Even when she had taken her sewing, and seated herself at her favorite window, in the nursery, her hands dropped in her lap, and her eyes wandered from her work and seemed fixed on some object far in the distance.

"What are you looking at, Mamma?" said Helen, throwing down her book, and running to her mother's side.

"I was thinking," said Mrs. Bailey, abstractedly.

"Thinking! that is just what you have been doing all the morning. Do tell me what that letter was about!" said the little girl.

"Do, Mamma."

Mrs. Bailey never did anything because she was teased to do it, but Helen, like many other children, could not help thinking asking twice and three times far better than asking once, and more likely to win the desired consent.

"I cannot tell you now," said Mrs. Bailey, musing, "perhaps I will, by and by," and the mother was leaving the room.

"Let me go with you," said Helen, holding rather boisterously on to her mother's dress.

"Not now," said Mrs. Bailey, gently disengaging herself, and walking quietly away to her own room. Opening the letter that had thrown her into a brown study, she read it again and again. The letter was from an early friend of Mrs. Bailey, who had come from her distant home to have the advice of a skilful physician in a neighboring city. It was as follows :

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—

I know that you will feel for me, when I tell you that I am really troubled about my children. The able physician, whom you recommended to me, has already been of much service to me, and I am willing to remain

here to be under his care, for several months longer. My little boy and the baby are quite well, and I can safely trust them with their experienced nurse, but Ally's position here will be very unfavorable to her. The gentlemen boarders are inclined to take a great deal of notice of her, and I can already perceive the effect their thoughtless praise has had upon her. Confined as I am to my darkened room, I cannot keep her constantly at my side, and I am truly puzzled to know what to do with her. It would be of inestimable advantage to the child, if you would take her with you for a few months, and give her the affectionate care and training that have been so successful with your dear little Helen, of whom I hear glowing accounts. I have stated my wishes plainly, and I hope for a frank response.

Yours, most affectionately,

MARY ATWOOD.

Helen Bailey was an only child, and the dearer to her mother, because she had been left, when a brother and sister had been taken away by sudden sickness.

Mrs. Bailey had carefully guarded Helen from all evil influence, and now she felt most

unwilling to give her for a companion a child of whom she knew almost nothing. For years Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Atwood had been separated, their intercourse having only lately been renewed by the circumstances which had brought Mrs. Atwood, as an invalid, to the city.

Mrs. Bailey was sorely puzzled what to do, and now, as in all her perplexities, she resolved to ask the direction of her Heavenly Father. Kneeling down, she begged to be guided to a right decision in the matter which had cost her so much thought.

By degrees her mind became clearer. She remembered that Mrs. Atwood, in her present condition, might at any time leave her children motherless, and she resolved to receive the little girl, as had been proposed. "I will try and do what I can for Ally," said Mrs. Bailey to herself, "and I trust my Heavenly Father will overrule for good any influence she may exert on my darling child."

Helen was delighted to hear that she was to have a playmate, and she immediately began to form plans for future pleasures to be enjoyed with Ally, of whom she resolved to be very fond.


Mrs. Bailey was glad to see that no thought of selfishness seemed to mingle with Helen's joy, and she began herself to think more cheerfully of the coming of the stranger.

After the death of her little children, Mrs. Bailey had continued to make use of the nursery for Helen; her playthings were kept there, and there Helen sewed, played, and had a school, and there she slept,—with the door open into her mother's room, which was near at hand. Now, another small bed was placed in the corner of the nursery, and Mrs. Bailey prepared to take the same watchful care of little Ally that she had been accustomed to give to Helen.

When everything was arranged for the new-comer, Mrs. Bailey looked about her with much satisfaction, and felt as if she should love the little girl, who was to be brought to her home and her heart.

III.

Ally's Arrival.

HE day had arrived when Ally Atwood was expected at Mrs. Bailey's. Helen was all impatience, and did not seem to have a doubt but what Ally's visit was to add greatly to her pleasure.

Helen had gone on an errand to the attic, and Ally was actually taking off her things in the nursery, before Helen knew that she was in the house.

"Here, Mother, is this the piece-bag you wanted?" said Helen,—but as she spoke, she spied the little stranger, and stopped, and stood still for the moment, with the great bag in her hand.

Ally Atwood did not wait for Helen to make the advances, but walked straight up to her and held out her hand, saying at the

same time: "I know this is Helen, for she looks just as I thought she would."

Helen had heard that Ally was two years older than she, but she had no idea that she was to be so much taller, and seem, as Helen would have expressed it, so much like a woman.

Ally's unembarrassed way of making acquaintance, put Helen at ease at once, and she thought she should soon feel as if they had known each other always.

"Come, come see my baby-house," said Helen, as soon as the little visitor had laid off her things.

"I must go down stairs to papa," said Ally, decidedly, as she stepped off towards the stairs, as if she were at home.

"I did not know your papa was here," said Helen, "but of course I might have known that some one must have come with you."

Helen liked her own way, and she was not particularly pleased to see Ally so independent; but Mrs. Bailey noticed it with pleasure, for she had feared that the little visitor would be inclined to give way to Helen on all occasions.

"Yes, Ally must go to her father, and you too must come down and see Mr. Atwood," said Mrs Bailey, holding out a hand to each of the children.

Helen took the hand, but Ally did not seem to see it, for she walked on by herself alone.

Mr. Atwood was a pleasant, cheerful-looking man, and Helen felt, as he took Ally on one knee, that she would not mind sitting on the other, to make all things even. He seemed to understand her feeling, for he said kindly: "Come, Helen, you and Ally are to be like sisters, and you must sit here together."

The father looked first at one little girl and then at the other, and said at length: "A fine little pair, I think, Mrs. Bailey, and I hope they will get on well together. You must not want to take the lead always, Ally; remember, Helen must have her way sometimes."

Ally looked as if she did not hear, and Mr. Atwood did not repeat what he had said. Helen began to wonder if Ally was very wilful and she did not quite like the idea of

giving up to anybody, especially to a little girl only two years older than herself.

Ally did not seem to take much notice of her father, and in a few moments she jumped down from his knee, and began to amuse herself with looking at the pictures that hung about the room. Helen followed her, and soon whispered: "Come, let us go up stairs, we can play better there."

Ally was quiet; she did not seem to hear, and went on looking at the pictures as before.

"I've got some candy up stairs, and we can play tea-party," said Helen, who thought the mention of the candy would certainly have an effect.

Perhaps Ally did not care for candy; at any rate, she did not seem to hear any better than before. Round the room she walked again and again, and then she sat down quietly on a high chair, and began to listen to Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Atwood's conversation on gardening, as if she understood the whole subject.

It was, at least, an hour before dinner, when Ally took her seat, and she did not leave it until the bell rang, and the older

people rose, Helen, meanwhile, had grown very restless. She was not accustomed to being so long without receiving any attention, and she first came and stood close beside her mother, as if to remind her that she was in the room. Mrs. Bailey put one arm round her little girl, and went on with her conversation. Then Helen began to play with her mother's curls. Mrs. Bailey quietly put down the troublesome little hand; but in another minute, it was busy about her neck, arranging her collar and pushing at the breast-pin. "Sit down, my dear," said Mrs. Bailey, in a low voice. Helen sat down, but not immediately. Helen never openly disobeyed, but she sometimes showed a most disobedient spirit, by the slow, indifferent manner in which she carried out her mother's wishes.

Helen was again up and busy at her mother's curls, when the dinner-bell rang.

Helen was surprised to see Ally such a small eater, and concluded she was afraid to take anything before strangers. Ally did not seem timid, and when ice-cream was offered her at dessert, she was able to speak out a plain "No, I thank you," so loud, that she could have been heard in the next room.

"Not like ice-cream!" thought Helen; "she must be a queer girl," and this idea lingered in her mind all the while she was dispatching a generous saucerful of the favorite dessert.

"Have you a garden?" said Ally abruptly, when dinner was over.

"Oh yes; do you want to see it?" said Helen, brightening at the idea that she had found out, at last, what Ally liked.

Ally bowed her head, and off went the two little girls, Helen leading the way down the broad walk, and going immediately to her own garden, the choicest spot in all to her mind.

"This is my garden," she said, triumphantly; "and there, where that stick is, I have planted an orange seed, and I am going to have an orange tree of my own."

"I don't believe it will ever come up," said Ally.

"Mamma says that it will, if I wait long enough," said Helen, not very pleasantly.

"Where is your garden?" said Ally, looking rather contemptuously at the heaps of earth, and deep holes, scattered among the few roots of sweet-william, which were all

the plants that had outlived Helen's peculiar management.

"This is my garden," said Helen, with a mortified air, "but perhaps you would like to see mother's flowers."

Ally seemed like a changed person when she got among Mrs. Bailey's roses. She knew a great many of the varieties by name, and was almost ready to kiss them, as if she were meeting old friends.

Ally was leaning over a large rose-bush to get a peep at the only bud upon it, when her thin dress caught in the thorns and got a tear, at least a quarter of a yard long.

Helen looked to see her very much troubled and annoyed; but Ally only said, quietly, "We had better go in now, till I get this mended."

Helen and her new friend went to the nursery, and Helen got out her favorite work-box, and put its contents at her disposal.

Ally sat down in a little womanly way, and began to mend her dress, as if she were no new hand at the business.

Helen looked on with surprise. "Mother always mends my clothes—perhaps she will mend for you too," she said.

"I had rather do it for myself," said Ally, without looking up from her work.

A little girl that liked to mend, and did not like ice-cream! That seemed very strange to Helen.

"Suppose we play while you sew. I'll be the daughter, and you the mother at work," said Helen, who could not bear to be quiet a moment.

"I don't care to play that way," said Ally.

Helen was quite out of patience, and she felt inclined to go down stairs and leave the stranger to herself; but she thought that would not be polite, and therefore stayed, though looking most dissatisfied and uncomfortable.

Ally had just finished her mending when Mrs. Bailey came up to say that Mr. Atwood was going, and would like to bid his little daughter good-bye.

Ally walked down stairs very stiffly, and stood up beside her father in silence. He kissed her tenderly, and said, "We shall miss you sadly, darling; but I hope it will not be very long before your mother will be able to have you with her again. Be a good child. Now, good-bye." Again and again

Mr. Atwood kissed Ally, and Helen wondered she did not throw her arms round his neck, and say how sorry she was to part with him. "She does not care for her father, and it is a shame," thought Helen, and the tears came in her eyes at the thought of how great a trial it would be to her to leave her own dear parents, even for a week.

To Mrs. Bailey everything that Ally did was interesting: she was trying from trifles to learn something of the character of the little girl who was to be her dear Helen's constant companion for many weeks at least. She too noticed Ally's manner of receiving her father's affectionate caresses, but she observed what entirely escaped Helen's notice. Mrs. Bailey saw that Ally's small hands were tightly clasped, and that she held her figure stiffly, and her mouth shut tight, as if she were making a strong effort at self-control.

Mr. Atwood was no sooner gone than Ally took up a book from the table, and said to Mrs. Bailey, in a constrained voice, "Can I go up-stairs and read, by myself?"

"Certainly, dear," said Mrs. Bailey, turning at the same time to Helen and add-

ing, "You, my daughter, have not attended to your sewing to-day. You can sit here with me, and I will show you about it."

Ally walked quickly away, as soon as she had permission, and Helen looked after her with a most disapproving, dissatisfied air.

Mrs. Bailey had to speak twice to Helen before she rose to take her sewing; and when the work was in her hands, she spent more time moving the needle up and down the thread than in sewing.

"You do not seem to feel much like sewing. What are you thinking about, my darling?"

The tears rushed to Helen's eyes, and she said, quickly, "I thought I should be so happy when Ally came,—but I don't believe I shall like it. She is not like what I thought she would be, at all."

"Perhaps you have been thinking too much of your own pleasure, Helen," said Mrs. Bailey, gently. "Ally has come to us because of her mother's illness. She is away from home, and quite among strangers. We must not think of ourselves, but try to make her happy."

"I did try, and I could not please her,"

said Helen, impatiently. She does not like anything I do."

"Perhaps you mean that you tried to make her do the thing you like, instead of trying to make her happy in her own way, this first day of her being from home," said Mrs. Bailey.

Helen hung down her head. She had thought Ally very disagreeable and selfish, but it had not once struck her that she was displeased because she herself was selfish, and did not care to do what Ally pleased. Helen did not like this last idea, and she hastened to say, "Ally don't mind being away from her mother. She seems as much at home as if she had lived here always, and she didn't care a bit about bidding her father good-bye."

"I hope Ally will not be home-sick," said Mrs. Bailey, thoughtfully. "I am sure she will not, if she finds my little Helen a pleasant, unselfish companion."

Helen did not look very pleasant at that moment. She felt that her mother blamed her, and she was not quite ready to own that she was wrong.

Mrs. Bailey sat a short time in silence, and

her face wore a sad expression. "Don't look so, Mother," said Helen, at length. "I will try to be good to Ally, but indeed I don't think I shall like her very much." Helen put up her mouth to be kissed, and seemed to think the matter all pleasantly and comfortably settled.

Helen dearly loved her mother, and could not bear to see her sad or displeased, and she was ready at all times to ask her forgiveness and promise to be better, rather than feel that there was any reason why she could not put her arm round that kind mother's neck, and receive her affectionate kiss. Helen was always sorry when she had done wrong, but she had not yet begun patiently and prayerfully to try to do right.

Helen had hemmed two sides of a pocket-handkerchief very neatly, and Ally did not make her appearance. "May I go up now and speak to Ally?" said the little girl, as she laid down her work.

The permission was given, and Helen ran quickly up stairs, expecting to find Ally absorbed in her book. When she entered the room, she did not at first see the little visitor; in another moment, she saw Ally

lying on her bed, with her head buried in the pillow, and evidently crying, as if her heart would break.

Helen was quite overcome. Every unkind feeling that she had had towards Ally passed away in a moment. Going up to Ally, she put her arms round her, and kissing her, said, "Don't cry, Ally, don't! We will all love you, and be very kind to you. You can write to your mother, you know, and she will write to you. I am sorry I have not been more pleasant to you. I ought to have remembered that you had just left your mother, and could not feel much like playing. Dear Ally, don't cry."

Helen did not say much that was impolite during the afternoon, but her manner had been such that Ally knew just as well that Helen disliked her as if she had said so, and she had felt it. Now that Helen really was full of sympathy and affection towards her new friend, it, too, was felt and understood. Ally did not uncover her face, but put out her hand towards Helen, and tried to speak in a voice that would not show she had been crying, as she said, "I expect to be contented here. I dare say we shall get on very well

together. You are a dear little girl. How old are you?"

Helen told her exact age, and went on to describe the party she had had on her last birth-day, when her mamma and the dolly sat up at her little table, which was spread with cakes and oranges, so that it made quite a little feast.

Helen had an artless, natural way of talking about things in which she was really interested, and Ally liked to listen to her. By degrees, Ally took down her hands from her face, and turned it towards Helen. Helen did not remark upon the swollen eyes of the little visitor, but she felt more tenderly towards her, now that she looked so red and disfigured with crying, than she did when her small face, with its irregular features, was so calm and indifferent.

The children were together until tea-time, and then they went down stairs, arm in arm, at Helen's request.

After tea, Ally took up a book, and was soon lost in its contents. Helen had seen her brush away a tear as she rose from the table, and was quite relieved when she saw her in-

terested in reading, and apparently forgetful that she was among strangers.

Ally's quiet manner seemed to have an influence on Helen, and she, too, began to read, and actually kept her eyes on her book for half an hour, without speaking,—an unusual thing for her.

"It is your bed-time, Helen," said Mrs. Bailey, pointing at the clock.

Helen looked up. It was half past seven, there was no mistake. "Isn't Ally going too?" said the little girl, in a fretful tone.

"Ally is going to sit up a half hour longer," said Mrs. Bailey, gently.

Helen looked at her book, and read a sentence or two. "Come, daughter," said Mrs. Bailey, closing the book. Helen looked cross, but did not dare to disobey. "Bid Ally good-night," said the mother.

Helen kissed Ally affectionately,—a proceeding to which Ally submitted, and then turned back to her book in silence.

When Helen had said her usual prayer that night, she added, "O Lord, bless Ally Atwood, and help me to be kind to her, and forgive me for being selfish this afternoon."

Perhaps you will think from this prayer that Helen was a very good little girl, though you had been inclined to think very differently before. The fact was this: Helen had always heard of the great, good Heavenly Father. She really believed that He loved her and watched over her. She knew that He alone could help her to be better, and she often asked Him to do so. So far Helen was quite right, but there was one thing she yet needed. She needed so to love God as to be willing to take the trouble to try hard to overcome her faults. She could not expect God to help her with His Holy Spirit, while she herself was making so little effort; yet, Helen's prayer was sincere. She wished to be good, but she had not yet begun to feel that the one thing for which she was to live, was to do the will of God.

IV.

Who Shall Give Up?

EELEN loved company of all kinds, and especially that of children near her own age. School seemed doubly pleasant to her the day after Ally's arrival, when she saw a seat for her friend placed at the little table, and heard her mother say cheerfully, "I shall have two scholars now."

"I did not bring any of my books from home. I have not studied now for three months; mother could not hear me after my governess went away," said Ally, not offering to take the seat placed for her, and turning back to the story which she was reading.

"You can take your seat at the table, Ally," said Mrs. Bailey, calmly, but decidedly; and the little girl obeyed, but with a look of quiet obstinacy in her face that Mrs. Bailey was sorry to see.

Helen lifted her eyes from the spelling-book to give Ally a glance of disapproval, and then resumed her studying. Helen had no natural talent for spelling, and it cost her severe study even to learn a dozen long words.

After a while, she looked up pleasantly, and said, "Now, Mother, I am ready."

"You can give the book to Ally, and she can learn the same lesson, while I am setting you some sums," said Mrs. Bailey.

Helen had taken great pains to prepare her lesson, that she might appear well before Ally, and now she was disappointed; and she said, pettishly, "I shan't be able to say it right, I am sure, if I wait. Can't I say mine now, Mamma?"

"I had rather have you wait," was Mrs. Bailey's only reply; and Helen did not like to say any more, though she looked very cross all the while that her mother was busy preparing her sums.

"I can say it," said Ally, as soon as Mrs. Bailey laid down the slate.

Ally's face had its quiet, set look, as she stood up to recite. She did not condescend to smile or look pleasant during the whole

lesson, though there was an air of satisfaction about her as Helen missed word after word, and she was able to go safely through all, without a single mistake.

Helen was apt to become confused about spelling, and her irritable feelings had helped to put the lesson she had studied so faithfully out of her mind. She was now thoroughly cross, and when she began to read aloud, her voice had lost its usual pleasant tone, and it was plain she was not trying to read properly, for she miscalled so many words, that it was hard to understand her.

Mrs. Bailey soon said, "Stop, Helen." Helen did stop, and looked directly at her mother, with an expression by no means agreeable or respectful on her face.

"Helen, do you wish to be a naughty girl?" said Mrs. Bailey, in a mournful, gentle tone.

"No, Mamma, no," said Helen, "I don't; I will try to be better." And Helen sprang to her mother's side and put her arms round her neck.

Ally looked on in surprise. Helen might have surveyed Ally disapprovingly all day, and it would not have affected her; but this

frank yielding had its influence. It would have cost Ally more effort than she was willing to make to have owned herself in the wrong; but seeing Helen's ill-humor blow off like a March cloud, made her feel inclined to show a little clear sky herself.

Ally took the book that was now offered to her, and read in her natural manner. Ally was a correct reader, but she lacked feeling and animation. Now she had gone through "We are seven," as coolly as if she had been reciting a column of definitions.

In arithmetic, Ally was surprised to find herself quite behind Helen, who was very fond of this branch of her studies; but she forgot her mortification on this point, and actually laughed aloud when she found that Helen could not bound Illinois, and did not know what was the capital of Texas. When the lessons were over, the children went to play in the yard.

Below Mrs. Bailey's favorite window was a green bank, which was Helen's frequent resort. Here she and Ally established themselves. "Come," said Helen, "you play you live here, and I will be a visitor, calling on you. The doll will be my daughter."

"I had rather read," said Ally, opening a book she had taken with her.

Helen thought this was very selfish. She did not realize that it was just as selfish for her to wish to have her own way, and she said, hastily, "You don't like to do what I ask you to."

Ally did not answer, but looked straight down on her book.

"I thought I should enjoy your being here," said Helen. Ally was still silent, and Helen was tempted to go on. "I never saw such a girl as you are," she added, angrily.

"Perhaps you have always had your own way, before!" said Ally, without looking up from her book.

Helen had a way of striking when she was displeased, partly in play and partly in earnest.

These taps had sometimes been given very gently to Mrs. Bailey herself, and had been answered by a severe reproof; but Biddy, the cook, had borne them, laughing even when they had been laid on with no light hand.

Helen was out of patience with Ally, and

and now she gave her a little slap on her bare shoulder.

Ally dropped her book, and jumped up suddenly. There was no calmness about her now. She gave Helen a hearty slap on one cheek, then on the other, saying, at the same time, "Learn better manners, miss."

Helen burst into a violent fit of tears, and exclaimed, "You rude, naughty girl! Oh! it hurts me so! I'll go straight and tell my mother!"

"Tell her you struck me first," said Ally, very angrily. "I won't bear that from any one."

Mrs. Bailey, who had been sitting at her window, had been a silent spectator of the whole scene. She well understood the merits of the case, when Helen, whose cheeks were still bright from the recent blows, burst into her room, saying,—

"Ally is a bad, rude girl; she slapped me, and it hurts me dreadfully. It is too bad!" And Helen cried and sobbed as if her heart would break.

Mrs. Bailey waited quietly until the tempest was over, and then said, "Your bad habit of striking when you are displeased,

has led to this mischief. I have often told you that it was a way of which you should cure yourself. Ally did wrong to revenge herself; but you were to blame for doing a thing for which you have been so many times reproved."

Helen did not say another word, but walked angrily away. She knew that there was truth in what her mother had said; but her cheeks still smarted, and her heart throbbed with resentment. She would not own herself in the wrong.

Helen went through her mother's room to the little dressing-room adjoining, and there she sat down by the window, and strove to amuse herself with watching the passers-by. It was in vain that she tried to be cheerful and contented. Harsh, angry feelings make unhappiness, which cannot be driven away in a moment.

Helen had been sitting at the window about five minutes, when she heard some one come into the adjoining room. She fancied that it was Ally, looking for her, and she almost held her breath, that she might not be discovered in her retreat. The person stopped in the middle of the room, then went

back towards the door, and Helen thought she should be again alone. She did not feel like seeing anybody. Helen forgot that the holy presence of God was with her, when she felt too cross, too wicked, to bear a human eye.

Helen heard the key turn in the lock to her mother's room; then there was a slight rustling. Words of earnest prayer then came to her ears—words that pierced her through to the very soul. Her mother was praying for her, as a poor, sinful, wandering child. Earnestly that mother pleaded that her little one might be stopped in the dangerous path she was treading, which might lead far, far from Heaven and God. She asked God to give her darling strength to resolve to struggle against temptation, and so love the Lord Jesus, that she would, day by day, grow like Him, and at last be gathered to His bosom. Then a blessing was implored for the little stranger. Mrs. Bailey begged to be aided by help from above, in leading to Christ the dear child she had taken under her charge. She asked the great God, whose eye would ever be upon the two children, to make them useful to each other, helpers in the right path,

and to bless them with the continued presence of his Holy Spirit.

All this Helen had heard with a beating heart; but when her mother, in a voice trembling from the tears she was evidently shedding, went on to ask to be forgiven for all her mistakes, that might have kept from living and growing the good seed she would have planted in her child's heart, Helen could bear it no longer. She came out from her hiding-place, and throwing her arms round the neck of her astonished mother, she exclaimed, "No, no, Mamma! It is not your fault. I—I have been wrong and naughty all my life. I have never tried to do right as I might have done. You have taught me. You have prayed with me. It is all my fault, not yours, dear Mamma; but, indeed, I mean to try now, and you must ask God to help me."

Mrs. Bailey put her arm fondly round her little girl, and asked God, with the deep earnestness of one who feels the value of the blessing implored, to strengthen her child's weak purpose, and help her day by day to struggle against the selfishness which would make her seek her own pleasure, rather than

obey the voice of the Holy Saviour, who calls the little ones to His loving arms.

When they rose from their knees, Helen kissed her mother silently, and walked away to the yard. She found Ally sitting where she had left her. Ally did not look up on her approach, and seemed determined not to lift her eyes, though Helen stood still directly in front of her.

"Ally," said Helen, in a low voice. "Ally, I am sorry that I was rude to you, and spoke to you so angrily. Won't you forgive me?"

"I think I shall love you, Helen," said Ally, suddenly. "You are different from any little girl I ever knew." Ally wanted to say, that she herself needed forgiveness, but her pride kept her quiet. She admired Helen's frankness, and loved her for it, but she could not yet try to imitate it.

Helen sat down beside Ally, and put her arm round her neck, and said, "What are you reading, Ally? may I look over you?"

"Certainly," said Ally; and she felt happy to have Helen sitting so affectionately at her side.

Ally had always been cold and stiff in her manners towards her companions, and no

little girl had ever seemed to love her. People who are naturally cold and reserved, need more warmth from others to draw them out. There is some way of reaching every heart, for all mankind were made to love each other.

After the children had read through the story that Ally had commenced, she exclaimed, "We have not been to the garden to-day. Perhaps that rose-bud is out!"

Helen did not need another word. She put her arm in Ally's, and they were soon admiring the beautiful bud, that was turning out its soft rose-color to the sunshine.

"Why can't we have a nice garden in your own place, Helen?" said Ally. "I always have a garden at home."

Helen felt inclined to say that her garden suited her best as it had always been, but she checked the rude words, and only answered—"I dare say we might."

To the little garden the children went, and there a pleasant surprise awaited Helen. Just peeping through the cracked earth were two little leaves of a beautiful tender green. Delicate and small as they were, they were enough to prove that the orange-seed had

been alive when it was hidden in the dark earth, and that it had sent up the young plant to grow in the pure air.

The children rejoiced over the little plant as if it had been a great treasure, and Helen triumphantly exclaimed—"I knew it would come, for mamma said so!"

And what was that mother doing meanwhile? She, too, was rejoicing. She, too, was beginning to believe that what she had planted in her child's heart was living and growing. She hoped that little Helen was walking, though very feebly, in the right way. God had promised to bless the teachings of every pious mother. Patiently Mrs. Bailey had planted the "good seed;" while it seemed hidden and lifeless, she had watched and prayed, and now came her hour of gladness. When such joy is in a mother's heart, there is greater joy in the presence of the angels of God.

V.

Johanna.



ALLY had been several weeks at Mrs. Bailey's, when the little school in the nursery was disturbed one morning by a very loud knock at the street door.

"Biddy is busy—go down, my dear, and see who it is," said Mrs. Bailey, to Helen.

Helen liked going to the door, for she was always anxious to see and know about everybody that came to the house. Now she sprang down stairs, at her usual rapid rate, and had the door open in a moment.

There stood a ragged little girl, about eleven years of age, who looked Helen straight in the face with her brown eyes, and said, "Want to see de lady."

Helen ran to call her mother, and then

she and Ally stood in the back-ground, to hear the conversation.

Mrs. Bailey had no sooner come in sight, than the little girl began—"My mutter sick. She want money. De baby sick. My fater gone way. ' Lady give money?"

"Where do you live?" asked Mrs. Bailey.

"Way off dat way!" said the little girl, pointing far down the main street of the small town in which Mrs. Bailey lived.

"Do you live below the church?" said Mrs. Bailey.

"Oh, yes! way down!" said the little girl.

"I should like to come and see your mother, if you could tell me exactly where you live. Who is your next neighbor?" said Mrs. Bailey.

"Me don't know. We just come," said the little girl.

"Are you on this side of the street?" said Mrs. Bailey, who began to suspect that the little girl did not care to tell where her home was.

"Yes, dis side," said the little girl.

"Is it a white house, with a porch over the door?" asked Mrs. Bailey.

"White house, but no ting like dis," said

the little girl, pointing to the porch in which she stood.

"Well, you go home and tie a cloth round the knob of the front door, and in that way I shall know the house; and by-and-by I will come and see you," said Mrs. Bailey.

"Gib some money now—few cents?" said the little girl, in a pleading tone. "Jus buy bread, lady."

At this speech Helen began to cry, and Ally looked uncomfortable. They were both surprised when Mrs. Bailey said, "No, I will not give you money, but I will come very soon to see your mother."

Mrs. Bailey saw the tears in Helen's eyes, and said cheerfully, "Now, Helen, we will go back to our lessons, and if you get through with them nicely, you and Ally shall go with me to find this poor woman, and see what we can do for her."

Helen and Ally made a great effort to do well with their lessons, and in a half hour they were ready to put their books away, and prepare for their walk.

Down, down the street went Mrs. Bailey and the children, looking for the house with the cloth tied on the door-knob, but no such

signal was anywhere put out. Mrs. Bailey was beginning to believe that she had been entirely led astray, when she caught sight of a dirty sun-bonnet and ragged dress, which she was sure could belong to no other than the little girl who had begged so piteously in the morning. The child was going into a store. Mrs. Bailey stepped in after her, and heard her begin to beg for money, as if her life depended upon it. Mrs. Bailey walked up to her, and looking her very severely in the face, said, "*Where* do you live?"

"In dat brown house, down dere, in de lot," said the little girl, looking frightened, and running off in another direction as fast as her feet could carry her.

Mrs. Bailey did not doubt but that she had heard the truth this time, and across the muddy field she and the children picked their way. The little brown house was a comfortless-looking place enough. The windows were broken, the door was off the hinges, and the low steps shook under the children's feet. Mrs. Bailey went in first, hardly knowing what to expect to see. One part of the girl's story had been true enough,

for there lay a sick woman in the bed, and beside her was a baby, so thin and dark that it seemed more like a monkey than a living human being.

Mrs. Bailey stepped to the bed-side, while the children lingered on the door-sill.

"You seem quite alone, my good woman; perhaps you may be glad to see a friend," said Mrs. Bailey, looking kindly at the sick woman.

"Me lone, lone all day—lady so goot—lady, sit down," said the woman.

The single broken chair looked far from inviting, and Mrs. Bailey continued standing, as she said, "Your daughter came to me this morning, and told me of your sickness. I should be glad to do something for you."

"Bad tochter, bad tochter. She no stay mit me. She bad, bad!" said the mother, with an expression in which sorrow and anger were strangely mingled.

Mrs. Bailey took no notice of this remark, but turned her attention to the poor sick baby, asking how old it was, and what ailed it.

"He more as a year. He schleep none. He cry. He eat none. He has——" Here

the woman's English failed her, and she began to rub her gums violently, and to intimate that the disease might have arisen from the child's getting his teeth.

Mrs. Bailey had some knowledge of German, and she now began to speak with the woman in that language.

It was touching to see the poor creature's face brighten at the sound of her native tongue. Her broad cheeks flushed with pleasure, and her eyes lost their dull, sorrowful expression. Now she seemed sure that Mrs. Bailey was indeed a friend, and she poured out to her a history of all her troubles; of the husband that had forsaken her; the disobedience of her daughter, and the hopeless, pining sickness that had reduced the poor baby almost to a skeleton.

Mrs. Bailey spoke words of comfort, and tried to draw the woman's mind to the great Heavenly Friend, who "cares for the poor." Her words seemed to fall on a dull ear, till she thought of reciting one of Paul Gerhardt's beautiful German hymns. The sound was to that poor woman like a voice from the days of her childhood, before she had known poverty, sorrow and sin, and tears filled her eyes.

"Can you read?" asked Mrs. Bailey.

The woman nodded her head. There was a feeling in her throat that made her disinclined to speak.

"I will send you a book with some of those sweet hymns in it, and a Testament that will call back to your mind the story of the gentle, loving Saviour, from whom you have wandered. Send Johanna for them this afternoon, and the other things of which I spoke."

"I will, I will—lady so goot," said the poor woman; and, thrusting her head under the bed-clothes, she called out from her retreat, "Good-bye, come more."

Mrs. Bailey and the children now took leave. Ally had always lived on a Southern plantation, and the sight of a white person in such a condition of want was altogether new to her, and she had been deeply touched, and now she walked on, lost in silent thought.

Helen held tight to her mother's hand, as she said, "O, Mamma, what a poor, sick baby! I did not know there could be such a looking little child. You will do something for them, I am sure."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bailey; "the little girl,

who came to our house this morning, is to be there again this afternoon for the basket."

"Not that bad, naughty girl, Mamma! I would not speak to her, if I were you!" said Helen, indignantly. "I would not have anything to do with her."

"I shall try and see as much of her as I can, and hope to make her better. Perhaps she has never been taught to do right. It is a great misfortune to be poor, but it is far worse to be poor and wicked. You ought to pity the wicked, as well as the poor."

"Pity the wicked, Mamma!" exclaimed Helen, while, at the same time, Ally looked wonderingly at Mrs. Bailey.

"The pure and perfect God pities us. The holy Saviour came to redeem sinners. Why, then, should not we, who are constantly doing wrong, pity those who are far more wicked than ourselves. When are you most unhappy, Helen?"

Ally looked anxiously for Helen's answer.

"When I am naughty, Mamma, of course," said Helen, simply. "When I am naughty, because I feel so badly myself, and because you are displeased with me."

"I know you feel what you say," said Mrs.

Bailey, "and that will help you to understand how very miserable the people must be who are given up to all manner of dreadful sins, and how much they call for our pity. There is still another reason why we should be sorry for the wicked. It is because, unless they are changed, they will go to the eternal home of the wicked, to live in the midst of evil beings, tormented like themselves with bad passions. There they must live forever, shut out from the happy presence of the God of Love, and His holy angels."

"I ought to pity the wicked," said Helen, soberly. Ally was silent, but the words that were spoken sank deep in her heart.

VI.

The German Family.

HELEN loved to hear her mother talk, and ever since she could make herself understood, she had said that she wanted to be good,—that she wanted to be one of the lambs of Jesus' flock. That this wish should strengthen into a fixed governing motive, had been Mrs. Bailey's constant prayer. Now she welcomed even the slightest indications that Helen was learning to give up her own will, and to try to do the will of her Heavenly Father.

Helen liked to sew for her dolls; but patient industry, the sewing up of long seams, neatly and carefully, she could not bear.

Mrs. Bailey knew that something more than pity for the poor Germans made Helen sit down immediately after dinner to work on a large, coarse night-gown, which had

long been lying cut out in Mrs. Bailey's basket for the poor.

"Mamma," said Helen, blushing, "Mamma, if you please, I should like to work on this."

"Certainly, my dear," was Mrs. Bailey's reply; "but," she added, "would you, Ally, like to work on a little wrapper for the baby?"

"I will," said Ally, and Mrs. Bailey took down a roll of calico, and began to cut out the little garment.

Helen at once thought she should rather work for the baby, too, and she was going to say so, when something whispered to her, that persons who are wishing to do right must not seek their own pleasure, and she bent her eyes on her work, though she stretched out the long seam, somewhat disconsolately, and measured it with her arms, as she resumed her sewing.

Ally was very fond of her needle, and really enjoyed a quiet afternoon at her sewing. Helen had determined to work patiently, but it was easier for her to do so from seeing the satisfaction that Ally evidently took in the occupation.

Helen thought no one knew what was

going on in her mind—at least no one but the ever-present Saviour, who “readeth the heart.” Helen was mistaken. Her mother understood her, and loved her better for the effort she was making. Mrs. Bailey had often seen Helen working for the poor, every now and then calling on her mother to see how much she had done, and evidently laboring more from a wish to be finished, than from a better motive. Now there had been something in her bashful manner that told the truth that she was anxious to do something for the poor, whom God leaves to the care of His children, who are blessed with an abundance of this world’s goods. Those who are kind to the poor, because they expect gratitude or praise, will often be disappointed, but those who care for the poor for Jesus’ sake, will never lose their reward. They know that the loving, approving eye of their Master is upon them when they fail, as when they succeed; when they win reproaches, as well as when they call down on their heads the blessings of the truly grateful.

“May we see Johanna, when she comes, Mamma?” asked Helen, after being silent at

least a half hour. When Helen was silent, it was a sign that she was trying to be good, for one of her faults was, a desire to be always speaking or being spoken to, or in some way calling on others for attention.

"If Johanna comes, you shall certainly see her," said Mrs. Bailey. "I shall wait for her until four o'clock, and if she does not appear by that time, I shall send Biddy without her."

"There she comes, Mamma!" exclaimed Helen, in as joyous a tone as if she had never felt that for her part she would have nothing to do with such a naughty girl. Johanna looked shy, and very much ashamed, when she met Mrs. Bailey's eye; but Mrs. Bailey only said, "Johanna, I have been thinking about you almost all day. Would you like to live in the country, on a farm, where you could feed the chickens, and learn to milk the cows, and have as much sweet milk and white bread as you would care to eat?"

"Me sohuld, but me can't!" said Johanna, opening her eyes wonderingly.

"I am not sure of that," said Mrs. Bailey, encouragingly. "If you could be a nice, tidy girl, and show that you could learn how

to be useful, I think I might find such a place for you!"

The poor child's face brightened, and then the tears filled her eyes as she said, "Me bad, me badder as you tink."

"You can be better, if you try. Suppose you go home now, and see how nicely you can make the house look. We shall come again to-morrow to see your mother and the baby," said Mrs. Bailey.

Biddy now brought out the well-filled basket, and Johanna took it on her arm, and was going away.

"Stop! here are some pictures for you," said Helen, putting a set of Sunday-School cards in Johanna's hand.

Johanna was delighted, and exclaiming, "Me like dem! me like dem!" she walked down the yard.

That evening, as tea-time drew near, both Helen and Ally were on the watch for Dr. Bailey.

Mrs. Bailey had interested her husband in the poor woman she had visited, and he had promised to call that afternoon to see if anything could be done for the baby, and to try

to discover what was the matter of the woman.

It was plain that she had no fever, and her face and arms were plump, as if she could not have any seated disease. Mrs. Bailey had noticed that movement gave her pain, and suspected that there was some reason why she so immediately turned the conversation to the baby, when her own condition was spoken of.

When Helen saw her father open the gate, she sprang forward to go to meet him, pushing Ally aside to do so, and looking very much as if she feared somebody beside herself would get the first kiss. She had no sooner done so, than she felt ashamed of herself, and, stepping back, she threw her arms round Ally, and said, "I was rude. Come, we will go together to meet papa."

Ally had had no idea of going to meet Dr. Bailey; it was not like her; but she could not resist Helen's pleasant way, and let herself be led down the walk.

Dr. Bailey had a kiss for each of the little girls, and then he was able to answer Helen's impatient questions,—“Did you see Johanna's mother? Will the baby live?”

"I will tell you all about it at the tea-table," said Dr. Bailey, but I must go to my office to prepare some medicine, which I promised to send them immediately."

The children had only a quarter of an hour to wait before the tea-bell rang, and then Dr. Bailey appeared, looking as neat and cheerful as if he had not been all day riding in the dust, and going from one sick-bed to another.

"Now, Helen," he said, pleasantly, when they were all seated, and the blessing had been asked, "now I will tell about the baby. It is really a wonderful child; there is as much strength in those thin limbs as if they were plump with health. With proper treatment, there is no doubt about its recovery."

"And the woman?" said Mrs. Bailey, inquiringly.

"The poor thing! I had hard work to draw the truth from her, and I doubt if I should, if the bed-clothes had not chanced to fall from her arm, and left in sight two long, ugly bruises. In a moment I guessed the truth. You have been beaten sadly, I said."

"Hurt some. He drink; he not mean bad," she answered, hastily.

"Little by little I learned from her, that

her husband was once a steady workman, but that, having fallen into bad habits, he had lost his employment, and sunk lower and lower. A day or two since, in a fit of intoxication, he beat her till she could hardly creep into the bed, from which she has not since risen. When he came to himself, he was in despair about what he had done, and fearing the punishment of the law, had run away, never to come back, he said. She, poor creature, tried to excuse him all she could; but it is plain that she will do better without him."

"We must get her to the Home for the Friendless, where she will be properly taken care of," said Mrs. Bailey.

"Oh, that would be very nice! Could not the baby go, too?" asked Helen, eagerly.

"Yes, darling; and when they are settled there, you can go often to see the poor baby," said Mrs. Bailey; and then she went on to unfold her plan for Johanna.

Dr. Bailey agreed with his wife, that it would be quite impossible to improve Johanna while she was allowed to spend her time in the streets, begging, or in the company of other children, as bad as herself.

"To-morrow," he said, "I am going to take a long ride in the country, and I will stop at some of the farmer's houses, and may find some one who will take Johanna, and try to make her a good servant. She looks strong and healthy, and has not a bad face, though she seems very mischievous."

"Then you saw her, Papa!" said Helen, with much interest.

"Yes, she had just come in with the basket when I arrived, and I had the pleasure of seeing it opened. I never saw such delight in my life. The poor child could hardly believe those comfortable garments and that nice store of provisions were for her mother and herself. While I talked with the woman, Johanna sat on the door-step looking at the pictures, and it was amusing to hear her exclamations of pleasure."

Once Helen would have said, "I am glad *I* gave them to her," but now all thought of self was lost in gratification at the satisfaction her gift had produced.

That night when Mrs. Bailey went up stairs with Helen, at bed-time, the mother noticed that her little girl was unusually thoughtful, and seemed to have something

painful in her mind. When she had laid her head on her pillow, she said, "Oh, Mamma, I cannot forget that wicked, cruel man, who beat his wife so dreadfully! What a very wrong thing it is to drink too much. I don't see how anybody can, when they know how bad it is."

"It is a very wrong thing, indeed," said Mrs. Bailey. "But I think I can make you understand how people may be led to do it. Every human being has a soul and a body. Which is the most important part, the soul or the body?"

"The soul, of course, Mamma," said Helen, "because the soul cannot die."

"Which then ought to be the master, the soul or the body?" continued Mrs. Bailey.

"The soul, Mamma," said Helen, thoughtfully.

"Yes, the soul, certainly; and when the soul cannot rule the body, great sin is sure to be done. Which is the best and wisest being, a man or a horse?"

"Why, a man!" said Helen, smiling.

"Then when a man is upon a horse, he is quite safe as long as he rules the horse, and makes it obey him; but when the horse rules,

and runs away with the man, then even his life is in danger."

"I begin to understand you," said Helen. "You mean, the body must mind the soul. But only very bad people, Mamma, very bad people, don't know that."

"I am not quite sure of that," said Mrs. Bailey. "When a little girl loves good things to eat so well that she takes more than she ought, her soul knows she is doing wrong, but she is ruled by her body. When a little girl takes the most nuts or the best piece of cake when others are to share with her, her soul knows she is doing wrong, but she is ruled by her body. Where a love of nice things makes a little girl tease for them at improper hours, or accept them from the cook without her mamma's leave; or worse, take them from the pantry herself, does she not know that she is doing wrong? Certainly she does, but her soul is ruled by her body. When the body becomes completely the master, then the person in whom this happens sinks lower and lower, till he is little better than the pig that lives to eat and sleep, and wallow in the mire. What will such a person say, when God calls for his

soul, that might have been good and holy!"

"Dear Mamma," said Helen, the tears in her eyes, "I am afraid my body rules my soul sometimes."

"It need not be so, my darling," said Mrs. Bailey, tenderly; "God can give your soul strength to be master, and to make the body do only what is right. You need never be in despair about any fault; God, who made you, knows all your temptations, and He is ever with you. When your body would lead you to do wrong, you need but to ask His help, and you will be sure not to be led astray."

"I will try, Mamma," said Helen, in a low voice.

Mrs. Bailey kissed her little girl, and went down stairs, and then Helen prayed from the depths of her heart that she might so rule her body, that she should never more take one step towards being a poor miserable creature, more like a brute than a human being.

VII.

Strange Blessings.



MARGARET, the poor German woman, had been comfortably established at the Home for the Friendless, and Johanna had gone to live on a farm in the neighborhood.

Mrs. Bailey had daily reported the baby as gaining, and one Saturday afternoon she told the children that they should go with her to see Margaret, and take her the little wrapper, and the night-gown, which were at last completed.

"You may pick a bowlful of raspberries for Margaret, if you like, children," said Mrs. Bailey. "Her appetite has not been very good, for a few days past."

Ally and Helen started off to the kitchen for baskets, and Helen told Biddy, in a manner by no means agreeable, to wait upon them quickly, for they were in a hurry.

"A little Miss might say, 'if you please,' sure, and do herself no harm," said Biddy, angrily.

"Get the baskets quickly for us, if you please, Biddy, for we want to pick some raspberries to carry to poor Margaret," said Helen, very gently, for she felt that she had been wrong.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath," and the cloud went off from Biddy's face in a moment, and she soon returned with the little baskets. "Biddy don't always spake soft herself, Miss," said the Irish girl, as she handed them to Helen; "but poor folks don't have much teachin'."

Helen answered with a smile, but the pleasant expression passed from her face, as a new difficulty arose. One of the baskets was fresh and new, while the other was brown with age. Helen made up her mind at once to have the new basket, and she coolly handed the other to Ally.

"Look out for number one, is your motto, I think, Helen," said Ally, as she took the basket that was given her.

Helen looked out of humor, and walked for some steps beside Ally, in silence. At

length her better feelings conquered, and she thrust the basket she had chosen into Ally's hand, and said as she did so, "I won't be selfish this time, Ally, at any rate."

Ally made the exchange in silence, but she felt as she did so, that at that moment she should rather be in Helen's place, than in her own.

The raspberry vines at Mrs. Bailey's were young, and did not bear very plentifully, so that picking the fruit was rather a tiresome business. Helen was inclined to cheer herself in her labors by partaking freely of the raspberries; but she knew there would be but few, at the best, and she resolved not to let her body lead her to do what would not be generous or right.

"The bottom of my basket is covered," said Helen, at length; "I guess we have got enough."

Ally had managed to gather double the quantity that it had cost Helen so much trouble to pick, and the little girls ran to the kitchen, and had the pleasure of seeing that the white bowl was heaping full of the nice fruit.

Helen looked so longingly at the berries,

that Biddy said, "Take some, Miss Helen; Margaret can't eat all those!"

Helen put out her hand, but she drew it back, saying, "I had better not, Biddy;" and away she ran after Ally, who had walked straight up stairs, after being assured that there was to be no more raspberry picking, that afternoon. Ally had an independent sort of a way of going about, without saying what she meant to do, and as if she did not care whether she had company or not, that was trying to Helen.

"Why didn't you wait for me, Ally?" said Helen, when she reached the nursery, and found Ally comfortably seated, with a book in her hand.

Ally did not answer. This was another of her provoking ways, which Helen found it hard to bear. However, she stifled her unpleasant feelings, and took up a book herself. She did not read much, for her eyes kept wandering to the clock to see if it were not time for them to begin to get ready, as Mrs. Bailey had told them to have their bonnets on punctually at half-past three, as she did not wish to be detained. It wanted ten minutes of the time, when Helen jumped up

and said, quite authoritatively, "Come, Ally, come, you ought to begin to get ready now."

Ally did not stir, and Helen soon said again, "Come, Ally, you had better begin, or you will surely be too late. You know mamma don't like that."

Ally still sat perfectly motionless, and with her eyes fixed intently on her book. Perhaps you may think that Ally was reading,—by no means! Ally was in one of her obstinate moods. If there was anything that Ally disliked, it was to be ordered, directed, or reminded of her duty by anybody near her own age.

Helen fancied that she ought to hurry Ally, and she got herself quite excited trying to move her little companion to stir, or at least to speak.

At length the clock struck the half hour, and Mrs. Bailey called to the children. Helen, who was quite ready, cast an angry, reproofing look at Ally, and went down to her mother.

"Where is Ally?" asked Mrs. Bailey.

"Ally is not ready, Mamma. I have been talking, talking to her for ten minutes, but I

could not make her do anything. She does take such queer fits!" said Helen quickly.

"Perhaps my little Helen is to blame for those 'queer fits' sometimes," said Mrs. Bailey, who well understood from her daughter's excited manner what had been going on. "I am afraid you have been leading my Ally into temptation."

"Oh no, indeed, Mamma!" said Helen, "I tried very hard to make her do right."

"That may be, and yet, you perhaps were the cause of the mischief. You know that Ally dislikes to be directed, and that you really have no authority over her. When you remind her of duties that she remembers very well and intends to perform, you provoke her, and sometimes make her neglect the very duties she would otherwise have done. I do not say that this is right in Ally; but knowing her peculiarities, you lead her into temptation whenever you speak to her as if you were better than she, and therefore had a right to direct her."

"Oh, Mamma! I do not think I am better than anybody," said Helen, with the tears in her eyes; "I am doing wrong all the while."

"Keep that thought in your own mind,

my darling, and it will make you cautious about giving advice where it will do no good. Set as good an example as you can; that can do no harm, and may be of great service when you least think it," said Mrs. Bailey.

At that moment Ally appeared. She was at all times neat and tidy, and as her drawers were kept in perfect order, she knew where to find her things in a moment, so that dressing was a thing that took very little time. She generally allowed herself only half as long as Helen to dress, for Helen's drawers were stirred up, and "set to rights," as she said, almost every day. If Helen had let Ally alone, she would have been ready and would have started in much better humor than was now the case.

Mrs. Bailey said nothing about the detention, but made the children move rapidly on towards the Home. The quick walk had the effect she had hoped, and they felt quite cheerful when they reached the door.

This was a place of which Helen had often heard, but which she had never before visited.

"We shall go to the sick-room first, but afterwards you shall see the whole building,"

said Mrs. Bailey to the children, as they stood together on the steps.

They found Margaret in a long room, full of rows of white-covered beds, only a few of which were occupied. The poor woman's broad German face brightened as she saw them come in, and she tried to rise up to greet them, though the effort evidently gave her pain. She pointed joyously to the baby, who was sleeping beside her in a cradle, and puffed out her own cheeks to intimate to the children how fat he was growing.

The baby now began to nestle in his little bed, disturbed by the entrance of the strangers. Helen and Ally were rejoiced when they saw a pleasant looking young woman come forward to take him up. The baby knew her, and began to open his mouth and cry piteously, saying as he best could in that way, that he was very hungry.

"I suppose I must get his food," said the nurse of the establishment, and she prepared to lay him back in the cradle.

"May I hold him, Mamma?" said Helen, eagerly.

Mrs. Bailey gave her consent, and Helen took the little creature tenderly in her arms.

She spoke to him very gently, but cry he would, until she was fairly frightened by his screams.

"Let me take him," said Ally, who had been looking on very uneasily.

Helen was glad to give him up, and Ally now began to walk to and fro in the long room, with the baby in her arms. It made Ally feel as if she were at home, to have that little creature trusted to her care, and she spoke to him so gently and soothingly, and put her finger in his mouth so judiciously, that he stopped crying, and turned round his little head to see who could know so well how to make him comfortable.

Ally loved children, and she was really sorry when the nurse came back with a piece of bread spread with ham gravy. Most extraordinary diet, the children thought, for a sick child, and Helen wanted to say so in an undertone to her mother,—but Mrs. Bailey was speaking in German to Margaret, and she did not like to interrupt her. Margaret had just drawn from under the bed-clothes the Testament, and book of hymns, that Mrs. Bailey had sent her, and Helen fancied she saw a tear in the poor woman's eye, as she

pressed the books to her heart, and rolled out the strange sounding words, as if they were as easy to speak as English.

When the baby had done its meal, Ally had the pleasure of seeing the new wrapper tried on, and knowing that it fitted exactly; and Helen herself handed the night-gown to Margaret, who expressed her thanks in her broken way, and said Helen was "So goot, so goot," so many times, that the little girl felt quite ashamed, and wanted to say that she had found the sewing very tiresome, and would not have got it done, if Ally had not helped her, at the last.

Before leaving the sick woman, Mrs. Bailey had a word of kindness to say to the two women who were sick in two beds in another part of the room. It pleased Helen to see how lovingly they looked at her mother, and she resolved when she grew older, to try and be exactly like that dear mother in her desire to do good.

The little girls were much interested in seeing the part of the building devoted to the children. A drawer was given to each child for its clothing, and even those only four years old had been taught to keep these

drawers in perfect order. Helen felt mortified when she thought of the condition of her own bureau, and she resolved to be as neat, at least, as these poor little outcasts.

The children's school-room was an interesting place, with its great pictures and maps, its black-boards, and more than all its rows of healthy, happy faces; but all these gained very little attention from Ally and Helen. From the moment they entered the room, their eyes were fixed upon a little girl about five years old, who sat at a low table, amusing herself with picking out from a basket, all the large beans that were there mixed with those of a smaller kind. The employment seemed to give her pleasure. There was something so peculiar in her way of feeling the beans, instead of looking at them, that Helen at once asked in a whisper if she were blind.

"Yes, darling, but she is a happy little creature, as you will soon see," said Mrs. Bailey. Then turning to the child, she said, "Anny, I have brought two little girls to see you."

"Mrs. Bailey!" said the child joyously; and she sprang to kiss the hand of one whom

she knew to be a true friend. Then she drew near to Ally and Helen, and patted them affectionately, saying at the same time, "You are so kind to come to see me. Everybody is good to me; Anny is so happy; Anny lives here now; nobody ever speaks cross to Anny."

Helen looked at the poor sightless eyes that seemed so clear and bright, and wondered that any one could be happy who never saw the light of the sun, or a kind, loving face.

When Ally and Helen were once more in the street, they were full of conversation about what they had seen. Mrs. Bailey let them go on for a while, glad to know that they had been so much interested. At length Helen said, "I do think being blind is the worst misfortune in the world!"

"It is, indeed, a terrible affliction," said Mrs. Bailey, "but it often proves a blessing. In little Anny's case it was doubtless the best thing that could have happened to her."

"Why, Mamma!" exclaimed Helen, "what do you mean?"

"Anny's mother is a wicked woman, who takes no care of her children, and those who

have grown up with her are as bad and miserable as herself. We tried very hard for several years to get little Anny, and save her from such influence, but her mother would not let her leave her. She, poor child, was siezed with violent scarlet fever, which left her blind; then the mother said, in her rough way, 'She will be a poor helpless creeter all her life, and anybody may have her who will take the bother.' Anny has been at the Home a year, and there is not a happier child there. I should have liked to have had you hear her sing her favorite hymn about the 'blessed Jesus.' It is sometimes hard for us to realize that the Saviour is near us, because we cannot see Him; but Anny does not feel this difference, and she sits and talks to Him in a loving, truthful way, that is beautiful to hear. It was, indeed, a great mercy that deprived Anny of her sight, and brought her where she could learn to know and love her Heavenly Friend."

Helen looked about her on the bright sunshine, the waving trees, and the pleasant homes that they passed, then up into her mother's dear face, and thought "it was a mercy for poor Anny to be made blind, but

how happy I ought to be who know the Lord Jesus, and yet have my eyes to enjoy this beautiful world, and see the faces that I love."

"I hope Margaret's sickness may prove a blessing to her, too," said Mrs. Bailey. "She does not suffer much now, but then, she must lie and think—think. I am glad that your father says she will not be able to work for many weeks, as she will have time to become strengthened in her new principles before she goes out into the world again to be exposed to temptation. The poor creature seems really anxious to lead a better life, and we must do all we can to help her."

The little party were now near Mrs. Bailey's door, and they were all silent until they reached it. Ally Atwood was thinking of the new idea that she had just received, that sickness might be a blessing and blindness a mercy. Did she need sickness or blindness to subdue her stubborn heart, and bring her to the Heavenly Father who had hitherto made glad her life? This question was agitating the heart of the little girl, yet her face was calm, and only the one All-seeing Eye could know what was going on within.

VIII.

Helping One Another.



ALLY Atwood's proposal about the garden had been carried out. Where Helen's "wells" and dirt-hills were once side by side, there were now neat flower-beds and little paths just wide enough for the children to tread.

The orange plant was growing finely, and putting out leaf after leaf, as its stem lifted itself higher and higher. Helen was very fond of this plant, and round it she had made a miniature fence of little sticks, with a tiny chip for a gate to lead into the favored enclosure. To Ally, who had seen orange trees as large as plum trees, and standing in the sunshine, full of golden fruit, Helen's favorite plant did not seem such a wonderful thing.

Helen had never been fond of gardening,

and the hope of having real, ripe, juicy oranges of her own had led her to plant the seed. Now that she was trying to think less of the pleasure of eating, she had almost forgotten about her first bright expectations with regard to the fruit she would raise, and had learned to love the pretty plant for itself.

It is useful to love and care for anything, and Helen's orange-seed had already been of service to her. She watched its leaves as they came out, tender and green, remembered to water it when the summer showers failed, and little by little she found that there was pleasure in caring even for a plant, for its own sake.

She was glad when the little garden was put in order, that all about her dear plant might look attractive. Then she began to take an interest in other plants, and at length was willing to spend hours in weeding and watering, and in counting the buds on the monthly rose, or admiring the variety of shades in the plot of heartsease.

Ally, as well as the orange seed, had been of use to Helen here. Ally was a faithful worker. Whatever she undertook she wanted to do thoroughly. When Helen, at first,

would throw down her little hoe, or rake, after using it for five minutes, she found she could not call Ally away one moment before she had finished the task she had given to herself; and this had its influence with Helen's more restless nature. By degrees she learned to find pleasure in working beside Ally, and to feel unwilling to break off before she had done what she had at first intended. Ally was making Helen more industrious and quiet. Helen was making Ally more frank and affectionate, yet neither of them thought of influencing the other. Children give something of their own character to all with whom they mingle. How careful, then, should they be that they do not spread abroad ill-humor, selfishness, deceit, or any other of the evil traits that belong to those who are not numbered among the lambs of Jesus' flock!

Helen often tried to lead Ally to speak of the Saviour, and the heavenly home to which she hoped to go. Ally would listen when Helen spoke on these subjects, but always in silence. Helen was really troubled about her friend. She was afraid that in the Book of Life her dear Ally's name was not written;

and often in secret she prayed that God would lead little Ally to be His child.

Helen did not yet quite understand Ally Atwood. Ally never liked to speak of what she felt; it was not her nature to do so. She had not been accustomed to hear much said about religion before she came to Mrs. Bailey's, as neither her father nor her mother professed to be Christians. They had taught her to say her prayers and her catechism, and with this they had for a time been content. When severe sickness had come upon Mrs. Atwood, it brought, as it often does, the blessing of serious thought. Then she became anxious that Ally should be led to seek her "Creator in the days of her youth," and this had been one great reason why she had been so glad to place her under Mrs. Bailey's influence; for she well knew that Mrs. Bailey's constant wish and effort was, to lead those about her to the feet of the Heavenly Master she loved to serve.

Ally was naturally quiet and thoughtful, and day after day her mind had dwelt upon the lessons of religious truth that had been spoken in her hearing. Deep in her heart had been formed the resolution to be such a

Christian as Mrs. Bailey, and to begin now. No human friend had heard of this resolution, but the Great Heavenly Father knew Ally Atwood as one of His little ones, anxious to tread in the narrow path.

IX.

Wanting Company.

BELOW the garden at Mrs. Bailey's, there was a pleasant orchard, and there under the trees, Helen and Ally spent a great deal of their time when their presence was not required in the house. Helen was standing at the nursery window one afternoon, late in the summer, when some drops of rain suddenly dashed against the panes with a force that told of the coming on of a violent shower. "Oh, dear!" exclaimed Helen, "I left my doll under the old apple-tree this morning, and I must go right down to the orchard for it. Won't you go with me, Ally?"

"I am afraid I shall catch cold in my ears," said Ally, who was naturally cautious.

"What an idea!" said Helen, laughing.

"I love to go out in the rain if I have any one with me. I can't bear to do anything alone. Do come, Ally; I think you might."

Ally had become conscious of her own obstinate, wilful disposition, and she had been trying of late to be more yielding; and now, with great effort, she said, pleasantly,—
"If you really care so much about it, I will go."

Helen was delighted, and away she ran, without waiting for an umbrella, leaving Ally to follow her. "How splendid this will be for our garden," said Helen, when her little friend joined her under the tree, where she was packing up her work-box, and a story-book which had been left with the dolly. These treasures were hardly secured in her apron when the rain poured down in torrents. Helen laughed merrily, and seemed to think it fine fun to get such a thorough wetting; and away she skipped along the garden-paths, wondering that Ally did not seem to enjoy it. Ally was running, not out of gladness, but straight on, into the house, to get under cover as quickly as possible.

The children were soon made comfortable in dry clothes, and Helen forgot all about

the occurrence, which for the time had been so charming to her.

That night she was awakened by hearing some one groaning. She was out of bed in an instant, for she fancied it might be her mother, but she soon discovered that the sound came from Ally's bed. Poor Ally was in great pain, and was holding on to her ears as if she were wild. Helen hastened to call her father and mother, and then tried by her own tender caresses to make Ally feel how truly she sympathized with her.

Dr. Bailey gave the girl an anodyne, which soon made her sleep, and Helen lay down on her own bed, but not to rest. She had heard her father say that it was the exposure in the afternoon that had doubtless caused poor Ally's pain, and Helen could not forget that it was she who had urged Ally to go out in the rain contrary to her better judgment. Mrs. Bailey had often told Helen that there was much selfishness in her unwillingness to be alone for a moment. Helen was always too willing to trespass on the time of others, and interfere with their employments or pleasures, that she might have their company. Her mother's kind warnings now came home

to her, and she saw her selfishness in its true light.

For several days Ally suffered the most severe pain, only being relieved when under the influence of anodynes. Her hearing was completely gone. Dr. Bailey said there must be bad gatherings forming in her ears; and when Helen occasionally asked whether he did not think Ally would ever hear again, he only said, "he hoped so." This was enough to make poor Helen very unhappy, though her father did not say that he knew that several members of Ally's family had been left completely deaf by attacks of the same nature.

This fact Ally knew too well, and in the midst of her pain she thought of it with anxious dread. Ally remembered how many times she had pretended not to hear what she did not wish to answer, and she trembled as she recalled the bad, contrary feeling in her heart, which had prompted her to feign a deafness which might now cling to her for life. In silence she prayed to be spared such severe discipline, or to be enabled to bear patiently the great trial that might be in store for her.

X.

Ally.



ALLY had been sick for nearly a week, and Helen had almost lived at her bedside, tenderly waiting upon her, and looking at her with eyes full of love and pity. Helen had written a note to Ally, telling her how truly she regretted the selfishness which had made her willing to force Ally against her inclination to go with her to the orchard, and she had received from Ally an affectionate embrace, full of forgiveness and true affection; yet Helen was not happy—she dreaded the consequences of her fault.

Mrs. Bailey was sitting in her own room. Ally had fallen into a short sleep, and Helen stole to her mother's side.

"Mamma," she said, timidly. "Mamma, I am very unhappy."

"What is the matter, my darling?" said

Mrs. Bailey, putting her arm round Helen, and drawing her to her side.

"O Mamma, I keep doing wrong, and now I am afraid because I was selfish Ally is never to hear again. I am not fit to be one of Jesus' lambs!" Here Helen began to cry. Mrs. Bailey soothed her gently, and said, "As I have often told you, your unwillingness to be alone causes you to be selfish in the demands you make upon other people. Now, you think this is a very great sin because Ally has been made ill in consequence of it, though it would have seemed to you a trifle if no apparent evil had sprung from it. If Ally had not taken cold, the wrong would have been as great; and it is not greater now, for its sad consequence. We must not judge our faults by what we see caused by them, but by God's holy law. Many sins which we commit, and from which we see no evil effects, have a secret influence over the souls of others, far worse than all that the body can suffer. I am glad to have you feel a horror of even the smallest sin, but you need not be disheartened; God sees your struggle to do right, and forgives you for Jesus' sake. It is only when we have done wrong, and are

heartily sorry, and then feel that we are forgiven freely, and welcomed back like the returning prodigal,—that we know how to prize the blessed Saviour, for whose sake our sins are blotted out. He loves you, darling, in spite of all your faults. Ever remember that he is at your side to help you in the time of temptation, and you will learn to look to Him, and conquer in the strength He loves to give."

Helen turned her face towards her mother, and smiled through her tears. She had caught the blessed lesson, and it brought comfort and peace to her heart.

That night, when Helen was going to bed, Mrs. Bailey was down stairs with a friend, and Ally was lying still with her eyes closed; Helen thought she was sleeping. Helen knelt beside her little bed, and prayed from the depths of her heart to be forgiven for all the selfishness that had so long lingered in her heart and controlled her actions. Then she prayed for her friend, that her hearing might be restored, and that she might be one of the little ones whom Jesus calls His own.


Helen had hardly done speaking when Ally called her to her side.

“Helen,” said Ally, in a low voice. “Helen, I heard you.” For the moment Helen forgot what she had been saying, in her joy at the good news. Ally received and returned her kisses of hearty congratulations; then she said again, “Helen, I heard you. I do want to be what you said. I am trying!”

The deep joy that Helen now felt, she could not express. Throwing her arms round Ally, she sank on her knees at her bedside, and silently thanked God for this great mercy, this granting of the dearest wish of her heart.

XI.

A Happy Mother.

 ELEN was very happy when her little companion was once more able to accompany her to the garden, and share all her pleasures. While Helen had been spending her time at Ally's side, the weeds would have had their own way in the children's flower-beds, but for Mrs. Bailey's thoughtful care; she had had them kept in subjection, and had added several choice plants to the little collection that had been watched over so tenderly.

Ally was charmed, when she could once more trust herself in the fresh air, to find the favorite spot in such perfect order; and she was full of exclamations of wonder at the rapid growth of the geraniums, and the unexpected way in which the verbenas had spread themselves out to claim a little circle all

round the spot where their slender young plants had been just set out.

The orange tree, as Helen called her darling, had not been idle. It, too, had put out glossy leaves, and reared its slender stem, though it could not keep pace with many of its companions. Mrs. Bailey had promised Helen that she should have her "orange tree" in a pot, to be kept in the house during the winter, and that when it was large enough it should be grafted, so that it might really bear fruit, and be the wonderful thing she had dreamed of when she first placed the tiny seed in the ground.

Ally and Helen were busy one morning among their flowers, not arranging bouquets for Mrs. Bailey, but digging up some of their plants and putting them, one by one, into a basket they had ready for the purpose. Ally had a trowel in her hand, and she did her work as if she understood the business. Helen was laboring more awkwardly with a large knife, but made no complaints about her poor tool, though she laughed heartily at her want of success. Helen had given Ally the trowel, and had a quiet pleasure in being unselfish

"Why, Helen!" exclaimed Ally, suddenly, "I thought you had a trowel too!—do change with me."

"No, indeed!" said Helen, merrily. "The best workman should have the best tool, and see, the basket is full now, and mamma will be waiting for us."

Mrs. Bailey at this moment appeared on the back piazza, with her bonnet on. Helen took up the basket, and was going directly into the house, but Ally stopped to pick up the trowel she had been using. Helen put down the basket in a moment, and taking up the troublesome knife, she held out her hand to Ally, saying,—“Let me take them both, Ally; Jerry is in the wood-house, and he will put them on the shelf for me.” Before Ally could answer, Helen was running away towards the wood-house, and in another moment she was at Ally’s side; then they took hold of the basket together and carried it into the porch.

Ally needed no hurrying this day, and Helen’s drawers were in such good order that she had not the least trouble in finding her things.

The little girls looked very happy as they

went out the front door, following Mrs. Bailey. Helen would have skipped along the pavement, if she had not been helping Ally with the basket, and that kept her steady. They had a long walk to take, and the children's arms began to ache from the load they were carrying, but neither of them uttered a complaint. "Let me try alone, Ally," said Helen, at last, for she could not bear to think that Ally was getting as tired as herself. Helen would have taken away the basket by main strength, in her eagerness to bear all the burden, but Mrs. Bailey interposed, saying cheerfully, "No, Helen, there is a better way than that; you must let me have my share of the labor, or I shall not have any right to see the pleasure the flowers will give."

The little girls now took turns assisting Mrs. Bailey, and Helen was glad when she was at liberty to "hipity-hop," as she called her favorite skip, and Ally was pleased to be able to pick a flower, now and then that peeped out from between the rails of the fences.

The little party were now walking between fields and orchards, and Mrs. Bailey told them

that was a sign that their journey was almost over.

They soon stopped before a very small brown house, built far enough back from the road to leave a little garden spot in front.

Sitting flat on the door step was a healthy-looking child, which Ally and Helen would never have recognized as an acquaintance, if Margaret's face had not at once appeared at the window. She no sooner saw who the visitors were, than she hastened out to give them a welcome, almost stumbling over her darling in her eagerness to show her pleasure. It was plain that Margaret had been washing. Her red arms had been taken hastily from the tub and wiped down with her hands, and they were still glistening, while her apron told the story just as well.

"Ich bin not nice,—ladies must not mind," said Margaret, pointing to the tub at the back door as her best excuse.

"Then you get work enough to keep you busy," said Mrs. Bailey, pleasantly.

"Mair work as I can do," said Margaret, with a cheerful smile. "Alle is goot for Margaret now!"

"You would hardly know the baby, Helen,

he is so changed," said Mrs. Bailey; "is he not a fine, hearty-looking fellow?"

The fat little child was enjoying a thick slice of coarse bread and butter, and looked at the moment very healthy; though by no means as attractive a plaything as the delicate baby in its clean clothes, at the Home.

"He looks very well, Mamma," said Helen, who felt called on for some answer.

Margaret's eye rested fondly on the child, as she said,—“He besser as I eber could tink to see him. Dat is goot; but besser as dat is come to Margaret,—Johanna!” . . . here the tears of joy filled the woman's eyes, and she had recourse to the corner of her apron.

“Johanna! have you heard from her lately?” asked Mrs. Bailey, in a hearty way that showed that she was really interested.

“She war to see me!” said Margaret, triumphantly. “She war to see me! She rited in goot vagin. She bring apfels, one, two, dree, fier—twenty. Dat goot; but besser as dat, she clean, she goot, she bad tochter no mair! She glad to see her mutter. She kissen the baby; she lernin to read; she spreaked so kind! All is goot for Margaret

now!" Here the poor woman's joy overcame her, and she sat down on a chair. Then, as if ashamed to have taken such a liberty before a lady, she rose up suddenly, and turning to the children she said,—“A mutter must for her kinder, her childer, be glad. Goot childer, dat is besser as eberyting for de mutter's heart. Ich war not goot mutter, but die goot God forgives and forgets alle.”

“Yes, Margaret,” said Mrs. Bailey, “that is true for every one of us; we have more blessings than we deserve. Our sins are forgiven and forgotten, and we may cheerfully go on trying to be better.”

Margaret put out her hand and placed it on a Bible that lay on a small table near her, and said,—“Ven I read dat, ven I try, I be besser.”

Mrs. Bailey now called Margaret's attention to the plants the children had brought. The newspaper that had been thrown over the basket, was removed, and then the poor woman's delight burst forth in German expressions for which she knew no English. She no longer needed charity. She was earning her own living comfortably; but she

still needed kindness and sympathy. It was plain, from the appearance of her little plot of ground, that she loved a garden; and the neighbors could have told how, with her own hands, she had worked there with spade and hoe, until she had brought the dreary, trodden spot, into its present condition.

To have some flowers of her own was indeed a delightful thought. It was making the place look like a real home, she said to Mrs. Bailey, in German,—like a home in her fatherland.

When Mrs. Bailey and the children left Margaret, she was busy in setting out the precious plants, while her baby boy tottered after her, and made himself happy by setting out a choice collection of chips, in imitation of her proceedings.

“How happy Margaret is!” exclaimed Helen, as the little party walked rapidly homeward.


“Yes, she is very happy; she has the mother’s true joy,” said Mrs. Bailey. “She knows that she is now trying to set her children a right example; her little one is well; her daughter has been saved from a life of

sin, and is being trained to industry and piety."

Helen and Ally were silent. Each, in her heart, wished and prayed so to live that she might bring joy to her mother.

XII.

Bearing fruit.

IX years had passed since the commencement of our story. In Ally Atwood's far southern home, she had been daily growing more easy, frank and happy, because she had been becoming more and more truly the child of Jesus.

Mrs. Atwood had missed her little Ally sadly, during her long absence at Mrs. Bailey's; but she found her loss a thousand times made up to her when she again received her child to her arms. Her cold, quiet Ally, had come home determined to be a gentle, affectionate nurse. The mother, on her part, was resolved to be a true, patient, Christian mother; and many, many sweet hours they had passed together, learning side by side

from the Word of God, or admiring together His wonderful works.

Ally Atwood now lived no longer at her southern home. Near Mrs. Bailey's familiar residence, Mr. Atwood had built for himself, and Ally and Helen were once more companions, as in childhood. They still loved to be together, and each was still improving the other. Helen's frank, generous, affectionate nature, still had its softening influence on Ally; and Ally's earnestness, her patience, and her determination, prompted Helen to be industrious and firm.

Dearly the young girls loved to talk of their childhood, and precious was every memento of those happy days. Dearest among these mementoes, was the orange tree, which now hung out its bright fruit, as beautiful as it had appeared to Helen's childish fancy. Those juicy oranges of her own raising, were too precious now for Helen to eat; they were for the sick friend, or the little visitor, to whom it was a rare pleasure to have an orange fresh from the tree.

Helen's childish hopes had been fulfilled. From her little seed an orange tree had

grown, and borne its sweet blossoms, and its beautiful fruit.

Had Mrs. Bailey planted, and watched, and prayed in vain?

Ah, no! In her daughter's sweet, loving, unselfish, Christian character, she saw the living growth from the seed she had planted in faith.

God blesses the labors of those who sow the fields, and gather in the harvest; with equal certainty he gives his blessing to those mothers who train their children for Him, with patience, watchfulness and prayer.

